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February 1, 2022

Chairman Steve Cohen
Ranking Member Mike Johnson
The Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties
2141 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman,

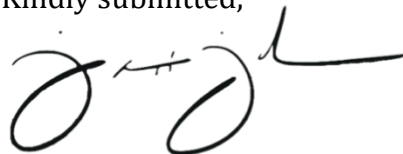
I am humbled to submit this letter of testimony in support of establishing the composition known as *Lift Every Voice and Sing* as the United States' National Hymn.

This song has served as a cry for justice, a salve for healing, and an anthem for equality since its writing in 1900. I, like so many before me, have sung this song in church and during Black History Month programs since I was a child. This bill will declare, with permanence, the composition's necessary message of hope which will resonate through the annals of American history and not simply be relegated to the aforementioned occasions. Its importance within this country's story is immeasurable; having been sung during crucial civil rights victories, protests, and marches. This song has the power to unify people towards a common goal proclaimed by this country's founders; life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

In 2020, as civil unrest rose to fever pitch, I felt called to use my voice as a black man and as a Creative. Shortly after the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery I found myself emotionally overwhelmed to the point of tears. In that moment I was compelled to use music as a way to continue, and for some start, the conversation of the value of Black lives in this country. *Lift Every Voice and Sing* was the tool I used to articulate my exasperation via social media. To my surprise the video went viral, received national recognition from the NAACP and garnered a GRAMMY® nomination that same year.

This hymn's lyrics inspires a change long overdue for this country. While Francis Scott Key's *The Star-Spangled Banner* serves as this country's national anthem, *Lift Every Voice and Sing* would similarly illustrate the pride America takes in its fight for progress and advancement for all Americans.

Kindly submitted,



Jarrett Johnson
GRAMMY® Nominated Singer/Songwriter